

WASHINGTON D.C. – Rep. Darrell Issa, the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, [sent a letter today](#) to the Chairman of the Recovery Act Transparency and Accountability Board (RAT Board) Earl Devaney today requesting a full explanation of activities conducted by the Recovery Independent Advisory Panel (Independent Panel) and raised “questions about the motivation behind their appointment and the troubling potential for the politicization of stimulus oversight.”

“Given the Administration’s ongoing and extensive effort to deceive the American people about the results of the stimulus, the independence of your work is essential in carrying out your responsibilities,” Issa wrote. “In order to maintain your independence, however, the RAT Board must be especially cautious and guarded when receiving partisan advice by a group of political allies of the President who are compensated with taxpayer money and potentially put in place to advance the President’s efforts to mislead the American people.”

The Independent Panel, composed of members appointed by the President, is tasked with “mak[ing] recommendations to the Board on actions the Board could take to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse relating to covered funds.” Issa’s questions center on the appointments of Steven Koch, Edward Tufte and Myrta “Chris” Sale.

Koch is a veteran donor and fundraiser for President Obama's political efforts and has donated thousands of dollars personally to the President's political campaigns, even serving on the President's Finance Committee in 2004 and "bundled" more than \$200,000 for the 2008 campaign. "While Mr. Koch is clearly an accomplished fundraiser for the President and other Democratic politicians, it is unclear what other skills he will bring to the oversight of stimulus funds," Issa wrote.

Koch's political fundraising prowess is shared by another member of the Independent panel, Edward Tufte, a professor of political science at Yale who has also donated tens of thousands of dollars to the President and the Democratic Party.

Myrta "Chris" Sale is a veteran official from the Clinton Administration who served as the Deputy Commissioner of the Immigration Naturalization Service (INS) from 1993-1997. Under

her leadership, 16,400 new citizens who had been arrested for at least one felony were welcomed into the United States. After Congress, the Justice Department's Inspector General and independent auditors found that 180,000 foreigners were allowed to become citizens without the results of complete background checks, Sale departed the agency for what news reports characterized as "being held accountable for persistent management failures within INS."

Issa wrote, "While Ms. Sale will presumably not be offering advice to the RAT Board on immigration policy, it remains unclear what expertise she offers in assisting the RAT Board in providing oversight of stimulus spending."

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